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am sure that "Fare thee well! and if forever, still forever fare thee well", does not gain in Bourget's rendering, *Adieu, et si c'est pour toujours, hé bien, adieu, pour toujours adieu. Larmes, vaines larmes*, was Brunetiere's obvious translation of "tears, idle tears", and there are "tears" in *larmes*, but not our tears. One reason of the inadequacy of translation is the hopeless difference of the phonetic affinities of the various mechanical equivalents. Translate "nightingale" by *rossignol*, if you choose, but the associations of *rossignol* are as ignoble as those of "nightingale" are lofty, and everybody knows how the French Melpomene balked at the translation of Othello because of the "handkerchief". *Mouchoir*, with all its vile associations, was not meant for a tragic crisis. What is the conclusion of the whole matter? Must everybody learn Greek? Such a conclusion would savor too much of that plea for Greek which I declined to make at the outset of these talks. And yet I should like to say a word in closing by way of reply to those who sneer at a smattering of this language and that. It is astonishing, I have said elsewhere, how much enjoyment one can get from a language one understands imperfectly; and Prince Kropotkin, a linguist as all Russians are, asks, "Is there a higher aesthetic delight than to read poetry in a language which one does not yet quite thoroughly understand?" It is astonishing what a moral effect the sentences of a foreign tongue can exercise. It is astonishing what a feeling of fellowship is engendered by a stock quotation from Latin and Greek. Whether it is worth while to spend so much time on Latin and Greek in order to recall a musical line from Homer or Virgil, to say from the heart some of the untranslatables, such as *Sunt lacrimae rerum*, such as *meta kai tode toisi genestho*, to put one's self into sympathetic relation with the scholarly past, it is not for me to say, as my testimony may be suspect, and might reveal more of my life than would be fitting. All that the best of us reach in any range of study is a smattering, and I am only thankful for my own smatterings. In crises of life the words that come up to one are not always the words of the mother tongue but those that had been acquired at school, the words of comfort and counsel that saved the lesson from being an unmitigated bore. Those nails fastened by the masters of assemblies are golden nails. We say of a supreme resolve: *iacta alea esto*. It means more than "The die is cast", for it means "Let the die be cast and stay cast". But when Caesar crossed the Rubicon he used Greek and not Latin. *Anerrhiphtho kybos* is recorded among the fragments of his favorite Menander. A queer French writer engraved on his seal the English words "Too late!"—the summary of a life that was on the whole a failure. It does not mean more to us than *Trop tard*, but it must have meant much more to him. Reading Luther's Table Talk many years ago I was struck with the fact that whenever the great translator of the Bible was stirred, he quoted scripture in Latin. *Führ' uns nicht in Versuchung* of his own *Vater unser* could never have meant the same to him as *Ne nos inducas in tentationem*. One's stock of Hebrew may be scant, but one can never forget the narrative of Samson and the strange puns in which he, like other strong men of history, indulged, so that from his entrance to his exit every utterance is a rude jest; and deeply affecting as the story of Joseph is in any version, the three Hebrew words of Jacob's cry over the bloody raiment of his son Joseph defy translation, and linger in the memory

long after what Heinrich Heine called the "tick tack" of the model Hebrew verb has become a faint echo in the brain.

C. K.

### THE ORAL METHOD OF TEACHING LATIN<sup>1</sup>

The oral method of teaching Latin is, properly considered, not a novelty. Its apparent novelty consists in its application to the present conditions of the study of the Classics in our schools. For the oral method has been employed in the teaching of modern languages regularly in our schools for a number of years, and was employed in the teaching of Latin universally down to a comparatively recent period, say, a century or more ago. The introduction of the oral method in the teaching of Latin and Greek, then, at the present day is, on the one hand, a reversion, with certain modifications, to a form of teaching prevalent centuries ago, and, on the other hand, is an adaptation of a form of teaching well-known among our modern language teachers.

The insistence upon a modification of our present system of teaching the Classics is loud and widespread. It proceeds, as we all know, from a profound dissatisfaction with the results of our present teaching. In a democracy like ours the appeal must be made ultimately to the majority, and, if they are not convinced, they labor in vain who try only to convince the cultivated classes. Democracy is only just now coming to its own in the field of education. Nowhere has conservatism held its place more stubbornly. Murmurs of the people against the systems of training to which they have been subjected became seriously effective only in comparatively recent times.

In the minds of the unthinking criticism means immediate reform, and that reform is apt, sometimes, to take the form of obliteration, if it is opposed without due caution. Now the people at large are profoundly convinced of the inefficacy of the training in the Classics which has come down to us as the traditional training of a gentleman. Almost everywhere the college graduate up to a quarter of a century ago had studied Latin for from four to six years. Not one in one hundred, when he left college, was possessed of any genuine command of the language, and the utter lack of knowledge of Latin which he displayed in later years was always coupled with the feeling that he was woefully ignorant of it when he left college. We may say that the college student forgets in after life what he knew in leaving college, of physics, of higher mathematics, of the details of history, etc., and that is true; but, as he looks back upon his college course there was a time when he knew

<sup>1</sup> Address delivered at the meeting of the National Educational Association before the Round Table on the Teaching of Latin, July 8, 1910.

something about these things, and there was a period when he showed a certain facility in his knowledge. Very rarely does a college student show facility in his knowledge of the Classics. It is a common thing to hear educated people laugh about their ignorance of Latin, which they once studied. You rarely hear them laugh about their ignorance of the other subjects that they studied. In the defense of our work as teachers of the Classics, we have fallen back upon the affirmation that they are of particular importance as mental gymnastic, and to that in our modern times we have added another reason which we maintain with great enthusiasm, the importance of the study of the Classics for a proper knowledge of the intricacies of usage of our mother tongue. The public is not interested in either of these reasons, and is not inclined to accept our ordinary explanations of the lack of attainment of our students in our classes in Latin and Greek. This age is an age which demands results, and, if results are not forthcoming, is apt to visit its indignation not so much upon the teacher as upon the subject, as we have learned to our cost. What, therefore, people demand is that if the student studies Latin he should gain some genuine knowledge of it and, while some of us may regard that attitude as unjustifiable, it is nevertheless one which we have to face. If such a demand were impossible of fulfillment, then we might lie back and face the worst, but we are not willing to admit that we are unable, with the time at our command, to develop a reading knowledge of Latin, and, inasmuch as we have failed to do this according to the old method, thinking teachers are turning their eyes to the lessons of the past, and to the lessons that may be drawn from the experience of their colleagues in the modern field, and so has arisen the advocacy of the oral method, or, as it is sometimes called, the direct method.

The first question that presents itself in this discussion is this: by the employment of the oral method do we mean that we desire to teach our pupils to use Latin in common conversation, as if it were a modern language? Now this question may be answered unhesitatingly in the negative. Latin, in spite of the dreams of some enthusiasts, cannot be made a spoken tongue. What, then, do we mean to do? In brief we lay down this premise, that the prime necessity for ready reading of Latin is ready knowledge of it, its peculiarities of structure, its peculiarities of form, and, furthermore, that this reading knowledge can best be obtained by constant employment on the part of the pupil of the knowledge that he gains *as he gains it*. It must be remembered that, while modern languages are taught now by the oral method, very few of those who study them may be expected to employ them in current speech. Nay, even those students who go on to

the higher academic degrees, for which all universities now require a rudimentary knowledge of French and German, even they are not expected, nor do they themselves expect, in the vast majority of cases, ever to speak the language; but the experience of our modern friends shows that the best preparation for reading is the oral use of the tongue and a proper theory of teaching would declare that what is true with regard to the modern language is true with regard to the ancient.

The literature of Greece and Rome, which has come down to us, is what we want to read, and what we want to teach our pupils to read, with a certain amount of ease. That literature is, with slight exceptions, an elevated literature, and it does not embody the language of the street or the home. There is, therefore, no occasion to employ in Latin, to any great extent at least, even in reading, the language of every day life. This is an additional reason why in advocating the oral method we do not claim to teach our pupils to speak Latin as an every day language.

In brief, then, when we speak of the oral method we mean the constant employment, in speaking, of that which has been learned. What will be spoken, the material of the classroom, will depend very largely, therefore, upon what is being studied at the time, not upon any merely conversational aim.

For reading Latin or any other language, the first thing that the pupil has to learn is forms; the next necessity for reading is vocabulary, and the third is syntax. Of these three, so little syntax is actually needed in the initial stages of study that what is needed may come almost without consideration as a by-product. The main emphasis is to be laid upon forms and words. Forms must be committed to memory, a truism everywhere acknowledged, but the committing to memory of a set of forms involves an amount of waste if along with that acquisition does not go constant practice. It used to be customary to have declension bees and conjugation bees and pupil was pitted against pupil in the ready giving of detached forms. While there may be some value in that practice, it is very slight, for experience shows that a pupil may be able to give the forms of a paradigm with exactness and still not translate correctly the individual form when he sees it in a sentence. But this is not all. A student who is well drilled in the isolated forms will stumble badly when different forms are associated in a sentence. If we take a simple sentence, like "The father gives to his son a book", we should expect our pupils to translate that sentence into Latin with ease and correctness. Now, as a matter of experience, the number of mistakes that a class of twenty can make in such a sentence, when every member of the class can inflect correctly throughout every one of the words necessary, is remarkable. I have seen a class

of graduate students, with teaching experience, stumble pitifully over such little sentences as that. I have seen a woman of ten years' experience in teaching when asked to render a sentence like "He wished to see his mother", do it in this way: *Volo*—a pause—a reflection—and finally—*vult*, *video*—a similar pause for reflection—and, finally, *videre*, and in the same way with the third word. Now that is not knowledge—that is a more or less pitiful make-believe which may readily be remedied if the student has been trained from the start to the difference between forms, as shown by their distinct signs, as distinct from the difference of meaning, as shown by distinct stems.

The oral method says, therefore, that we must not teach forms as mere *tours-de-force* of memory, nor must we trust to laborious translation of Latin sentences—with perpetual reference to the printed paradigm—but while we have the complete paradigm learned, we must exercise the knowledge continually in actual utterance. Given in the first declension the words *regina*, *rosa*, *puella*, *agricola*, and the verb forms *dat*, *dant*, *dabat*, *dabant*, the teacher will ring the changes as follows: The queen gives the rose to the girl of the farmer, queens give roses to the girls of the farmers; rose of the girl to the farmer; girl of the queen; to the farmer; of the queen; in the plural, etc., all rapidly, orally and vivaciously.

The employment of Latin in oral speech in the classroom requires, to be sure, a certain apparatus, particularly interrogative pronouns, such as *quis*, and *quid*, *quantum*, *qualis*, *quando*, and the like, and also a certain number of imperative forms, such as *dic*, *narra*, *responde*; a certain number of particles, like *sed*, and *at*, and *igitur*, perhaps, but this apparatus is very small. Practically it can be committed to memory during the first couple of lessons in the first year. It does not require any particular book, that is to say, it can be employed with any book. In the majority of our beginners' books the reading material in the early lessons is extremely artificial. It is an unfortunate fact that the vocabulary of the first two declensions does not lend itself to reading and conversation, but in spite of this, by the device of question and answer and with some ingenuity on the part of the teacher, the oral method may be employed with every beginners' book now on the market. Some are better than others, and in fact there have been attempts in recent years to provide material for oral practice in many beginners' books in the form of short dialogues or narratives, but in all these books the oral work has been incidental, and the written work and the set recitation have been essential. The oral method reverses this, and makes the oral work essential and the written work incidental.

It is evident from what has been said that a very important side of oral work is the continual

rendering of English into Latin. I know that some distinguished scholars maintain that the translation of English into Latin should be deferred for some months until the student has acquired a fairly complete knowledge of simple forms. The oral method denies this, and maintains that the boy who can render quickly at dictation a sentence like "The girl loves the rose", has a better knowledge of the forms involved than the one who can laboriously spell out *Puella rosam amat*. In the majority of our beginners' books the exercises for translation have a definitely graded length. We have usually some ten sentences for translation from Latin into English for every lesson, and perhaps half that number of sentences from English into Latin.

Now if the pupil has studied a lesson that contains two or three substantives and the same number of adjectives and verb-forms, the ordinary teacher can, as I have shown above, ring innumerable changes upon these elements and instead of the paltry ten sentences can form thirty or forty; as the lessons go on, with the increase in vocabulary the number is practically unlimited. There are, however, some books that have been made especially for this kind of work. Here we find the exercises consisting of a short piece of narrative with directions for expansion on the part of the teacher. We have English and German books made after this fashion, and it is likely that we shall soon have American books as well. That translation of Latin sentences is valuable is freely admitted, but, in the initial stages, its value is slight as compared with the translation of English into Latin.

It is evident from what I have said that at the outset very little attention will be paid, formally, to syntax. The use of the infinitive mood after a verb of saying, of subjunctives after the particles *ut* and *ne*, and of the indicative after a few particles like *ubi* and *postquam* will give material, together with the ordinary concords, for an immense amount of practice in verb-forms. The characteristic meaning of the cases, by which I mean the indirect object for the dative case, particularly with verbs of giving and the like, the direct object in the accusative case, the simple objective and partitive genitives, and the ablative of means, manner, separation and place where, will afford ample material for the most extensive drill in the forms of the nouns; in fact, it is quite possible, if it were desirable, to spend the whole of a year on reading which would involve practically no more syntax than what I have mentioned. How this amount of syntax is to be taught is a matter of small moment. If the teacher can do it inductively, there is no objection. Most teachers will probably find it preferable to give it deductively.

In the matter of vocabulary it is necessary to have

a strict limitation. The ultimate aim of Latin study, as indicated, would prevent any extensive employment of the colloquial phrases of the street. But, even so, the work of the students should be devoted primarily to learning those words that are likely to prove most useful in their reading, by reason of their relative frequency of occurrence; but even with the limited word lists of the first year much can be done, for the study of vocabulary can be combined with rudimentary study in word-formation, and, just as a child can make an adverb from an English adjective or an adjective from an English noun, so elementary training in such work in Latin, very early in his course, will increase his command of words surprisingly.

The oral method lays very little stress upon home preparation of original work. Reviewing at home is entirely in place, but studying the advance lesson at home is somewhat to be discouraged with ordinary pupils, because in many cases it is ineffective, either on account of assistance rendered to the child or by reason of the incorrect results with which we are so familiar. The translation of passages set for reading in the book should come from the study of the elements from which they are composed, and the home study would be better devoted to this. In some of the European schools a small piece of translation is put on the board, and the meanings of the words being known, or given, the translation is elicited and the class drilled on the material involved in it, the home work being confined almost entirely to reviews.

But here particular objection must be made to the use of the vocabularies so commonly provided in our text-books. The remarks of Professor Rippmann on the bad effects of the use of vocabularies in the case of modern language study are so thoroughly applicable to our own problem that I quote them (Modern Language Teaching 4.239):

The worst thing is to let the pupil use a dictionary or a special vocabulary. To look up a word in the dictionary or vocabulary is to get the meaning with the least effort and the least effect. The pupil who has been allowed to acquire the dictionary habit does not stop to see whether he can make out the meaning unaided. He turns the word up at once, and the impression is a slight one, even if he proceeds to write the word down with the meaning beside it. Sometimes there is a little difficulty that remains unsolved by the dictionary: a phrase occurs which cannot be made out by word-for-word translating, but requires a little thought before the right English equivalent is obtained. Many editors do not allow the pupil to do even this for himself; they supply notes which contain renderings ready-made. A comparison of such editions and those on reform lines throws an interesting light on the familiar charge that the newer methods are designed to make things unduly easy for the pupil.

Often, when I have advised the abandoning of dictionaries and vocabularies, teachers have asked: 'How, then, are the pupils to prepare their work?'

My answer is that, generally speaking, home-work should be revision and application rather than preparation; that preparation *with* a dictionary has grave disadvantages; and that there are two ways in which a fresh portion of the text can be prepared without a dictionary, both of them educationally sound. The first method is the one which I should recommend for ordinary use: The teacher glances through the page or pages he is going to set for preparation, and underlines such words as he knows to be unfamiliar to his pupils; when giving out the home-work, he points out these words and explains them.

Now what I have said of the oral method is applicable particularly to the first year of study. It is there that the foundations of accuracy are laid. It is there that iteration upon iteration is absolutely essential, and it is in the first year, in our ordinary system, that slovenly habits of thinking are so frequently developed. In the subsequent years increasing stress will be laid upon prepared translation outside of the class-room, but at the same time the oral method always lays particular stress upon oral exercises. A favorite exercise of the kind is for the instructor to read before the class a piece of simple narrative in Latin, and quiz the members of the class as to the meaning of the passage, to see whether they comprehend it thoroughly. He then requires that the members of the class bring in on the following day the story as they remember it. It is to be observed that here the training of the ear is continued in that the original Latin is understood only through the ear. Another exercise of a different character is to read a short narrative in English before the class, so that they may have some connected idea of the story and have them write out the story in Latin. Such exercises as these afford plenty of opportunity for training in syntactical discrimination, for with every exercise special constructions can be required of the pupil. Naturally, if this were not done in the case of many pupils, the written Latin would take the form of a congeries of short detached sentences.

Now I have only attempted in the foregoing to give an outline sketch of the main characteristics of the oral or direct method. Perhaps the chief advantage of the method is that it is extremely elastic, and the fact that by reason of the demands that it makes upon the teacher it renders him at the same time practically independent of the text-book. It makes the teacher a teacher indeed, not merely a hearer of recitations, and the interrogator of the lesson learned. It emphasizes the personal relation between teacher and pupil. This very fact makes the method a more exacting one than the ordinary one of question and answer from the pupil, but at the same time its results are so much better that it is worth the additional exertion.

GONZALEZ LODGE.